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**Article** in *Leisure Sciences* · April 2016

DOI: 10.1080/01490400.2015.1127188

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**Leisure Sciences**  
An Interdisciplinary Journal

ISSN: 0149-0400 (Print) 1521-0588 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ulsc20>

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To cite this article: Kangjae Jerry Lee & David Scott (2016) Bourdieu and African Americans' Park Visitation: The Case of Cedar Hill State Park in Texas, *Leisure Sciences*, 38:5, 424-440, DOI: [10.1080/01490400.2015.1127188](https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2015.1127188)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2015.1127188>



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## Bourdieu and African Americans' Park Visitation: The Case of Cedar Hill State Park in Texas

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### ABSTRACT

This study used Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice to understand African Americans' underrepresentation at Cedar Hill State Park (CHSP) in Texas. Archival methods, site visits, and face-to-face interviews were conducted with 13 local African Americans. Four salient themes related to African Americans' underrepresentation were identified: (1) racial conflict within the field, (2) CHSP as a racialized space, (3) African American leisure habitus, and (4) lack of relevant attractions. These themes were closely related and together showed that perceived racial discrimination was a common factor which explained nonvisitation at CHSP.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 9 September 2014  
Accepted 30 November 2015

### KEYWORDS

African Americans; Bourdieu; park visitation; racism; theory of practice

Numerous studies have documented that African Americans account for only a small portion of visitors to state and national parks (Floyd, 1999; Johnson, Bowker, Green, & Cordell, 2007; U. S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 2011). Underrepresentation of African Americans is an important issue as recreation agencies seek equality and justice in program offerings to make them more relevant for diverse populations. Although research has shown that frequent contact with natural environments produces numerous health benefits (Faber Taylor & Kuo, 2006; Louv, 2005), African Americans are less likely to participate in outdoor recreation than other racial and ethnic groups, hence missing out on such outcomes. To ensure that recreational resources are enjoyed by the public, park and recreation agencies should attempt to make themselves relevant to historically disfranchised populations. Thus, an adequate understanding of African Americans' underrepresentation is imperative for environmental justice and the equal rights of all citizens in addition to helping public agencies better serve a diverse clientele (Floyd & Johnson, 2002).

Leisure researchers have examined underrepresentation since the 1970s, and a number of theories have been put forth to explain why African Americans participate less in outdoor recreation than other groups. Some of the dominant explanations include marginality and ethnicity hypotheses (Washburne, 1978), discrimination (Gobster, 2002; West, 1989), and collective memory (Johnson, 1998). However, few studies have employed these different explanations *concurrently*, even though a combined analytic perspective would provide a more comprehensive explanation of African Americans' underrepresentation in outdoor recreation.

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This study employs Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory to analyze African Americans' underrepresentation in the context of Cedar Hill State Park (CHSP) in Texas. The park is located near several large African American communities which constitute approximately 50% of the local population. This figure is nearly four times larger than the national average (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011). Despite their proximity to the park, African Americans constitute only 11% of CHSP visitors; the corresponding figure for White Americans is nearly 70% (Esri, 2010). Bourdieu's theoretical framework has the potential to blend the strengths of existing theories and offers an explanation for African Americans' non-visitation to CHSP. We believe this approach will aid researchers, policy makers, and park managers as they seek to address this longstanding issue.

## Literature review

Since the late 1970s, leisure researchers have proposed a number of theoretical explanations for African Americans' underparticipation in outdoor recreation. For example, the marginality and ethnicity hypotheses were proposed by Washburne (1978). The former explains African Americans' underrepresentation in terms of "poverty and various consequences of socioeconomic discrimination" (p. 176) while the latter suggests a "subcultural style, or *ethnicity*" that discourages outdoor recreation participation (Washburne, 1978, p. 177). Although these two hypotheses have been the dominant explanations for the last few decades, marginality and ethnicity were ambiguously defined, hence researchers tended to equate them with socioeconomic status and cultural characteristic (Floyd, 1998). Moreover, leisure researchers have not critically examined the factors underlying socio-economic status and the normative structure that limit participation in outdoor recreation.

Researchers have also investigated the impact of racial discrimination on African Americans' participation in outdoor recreation (Floyd & Gramann, 1995; Gobster, 2002; West, 1989). Some scholars argued that African Americans regularly encounter racial discrimination, and this disposition negatively impacts their leisure and travel behavior (Foster, 1999; Philipp, 1998). A more nuanced approach suggests that African Americans' underrepresentation in outdoor recreation does not stem directly from experiences with racism. Rather, it may originate from African Americans' perceptions and beliefs that recreational professionals are not welcoming or committed to providing culturally relevant experiences (Allison, 2000; Scott, 2000). For example, practitioners often assume that the majority of park visitors are White, so park stories tend primarily to focus on Caucasian culture. They often ignore, or worse, distort the histories of people of color (Taylor, 2000; Lockhart, 2006). Moreover, parks in the United States have historically been visited and managed by White males who imposed strict behavioral rules and dress codes in accordance with White cultural norms (Byrne & Wolch, 2009). Because many outdoor recreation sites are racialized and socially constructed as White spaces, African Americans may feel unsafe and unwelcome before, during or after their visit (Austin, 1997–1998; Carter, 2008; Martin, 2004).

Finally, Johnson (1998) and Johnson and Bowker (2004) utilized the concept of collective memory to argue that African Americans' under-representation in outdoor recreation is partially due to the lingering effect of racial oppression such as slavery and lynching. These horrifying incidents often took place in outdoor settings. As a result, younger generations of African Americans may assimilate stories from family lore and public information and, thus, associate wildlands with fear and danger.

While these different theoretical approaches have offered insights into the underrepresentation issue, there is a need to provide a comprehensive framework to explain

under-participation (Floyd & Stodolska, 2014). Instead of using one lens, investigators acknowledged the importance of a consolidated analytic approach that examines multiple perspectives on leisure behavior (Byrne & Wolch, 2009; Floyd, Walker, Stodolska, & Shinew, 2014; Gómez, 2002). A coherent perspective may promote a theoretical advance and holistic understanding of under-representation. To this end, we examined the potential of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice as an integrative theoretical framework for understanding African Americans' non-visitation to parks and outdoor recreation areas.

### ***Pierre Bourdieu and the theory of practice***

Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) theory of practice may well be an effective theoretical perspective for explaining African American under-representation in outdoor recreation. The theory posits that social inequities are established and reproduced through social institutions and cultural practices. Bourdieu (1990) explains culture, power, stratification, and reproduction using three major concepts: habitus, capital, and field.

Habitus is a group's mode of conduct that defines what is appropriate or inappropriate, available or unavailable, possible or impossible in given social situations. Habitus is a system of dispositions and cultural norms that are internalized and institutionalized through socialization (Bourdieu, 1984). It is developed unconsciously through habits, feelings, and thoughts in response to social meanings; simultaneously, it serves to legitimize collectively held cultural beliefs (Widick, 2004).

The concept of capital plays a critical role in the formation of habitus. Extending Marx's ideas, Bourdieu (1984, 1986) distinguished four types of capital: economic, social, cultural, and symbolic. Each concept corresponds, respectively, to financial status, social networks, possession of cultural products and knowledge, and power. In the present study, the meaning of symbolic capital and its relationship with symbolic violence is worthy of further elaboration. Symbolic capital is understood as charisma and power that *legitimizes* one's superior position within a social space. Individuals of a high social status display their lifestyles and cultural dispositions as superior, and arbitrarily establish social hierarchies. This leads to Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence, which compels individuals with less capital to accept superiors' value systems. The victims of symbolic violence adopt their superiors' valorization as legitimate, but fail to recognize its arbitrariness. Thus, Bourdieu's idea of capital is conceptually similar to Marx's in the sense that they both regarded capital and power as resources that create social hierarchies. However, Bourdieu's work accented non-materialistic and symbolic class distinctions via cultural, social, and symbolic capital.

The concept of field denotes the structure of a social setting in which habitus operates. It describes socio-historical conditions that influence individuals' behavior, such as power inequality, ideology, and the distribution of capital. Metaphorically speaking, a field is akin to an athletic arena (Thomson, 2008). Players (individuals) compete to improve or maintain their positions by accumulating more resources (capital) than others. They implement their own strategies to achieve this end; whether or not their strategies are appropriate or acceptable is determined by what is considered legitimate within that specific field. Thus, a field is a space of struggle, domination, resistance, differentiation, and inequality (Swartz, 1997).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) used habitus, capital, and field to explain how educational inequality in France was reproduced inter-generationally. Although the number of working class students in French universities sharply increased when the education system was democratized in the early 1960s, the number declined due to a high dropout rate and fewer new enrollments. Bourdieu and Passeron explained that working class students at this time did

not possess the habitus essential for competing in the field of French higher education. They had not been exposed to the subjects taught by universities during their formative years due to their scarce economic, social, and cultural capital. University professors valued upper-class students' habitus as it was reflected in language usage, writing style, and dress code. Moreover, working class students and their parents feared and rejected university education as a risky investment for upward mobility because of their limited wealth (economic capital), social networks (social capital), and understanding of university education (cultural capital). Bourdieu and Passeron explained that this constituted working class members' practical adaptation to the basic conditions of their existence. By internalizing structural characteristics and passively complying with their given social circumstances, working class families tended to regard higher education as heterodox or unbefitting.

Although Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) provided some compelling insights into social inequality, some researchers have criticized Bourdieu's theory, claiming it is structural-functionalistic and offers few explanations about social change or resistance by those who feel dominated (Gartman, 1991; Jenkins, 1982). Researchers have also criticized Bourdieu's ambiguous conceptual definitions and questioned its practical utility in scientific research (Swartz, 1997; Grenfell, 2008). Some scholars have found his writing style, concepts, and theory to be slippery and overly abstract.

### ***Bourdieu and African Americans' underrepresentation in outdoor recreation***

Despite these criticisms, Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) theoretical perspective seems useful for synthesizing the major theoretical explanations for African Americans' underrepresentation in outdoor recreation. For example, the concept of field focuses on the ideological force and social circumstances that legitimize social inequality and its perpetuation. This is consistent with the essence of discrimination and collective memory theses that stress the impact of racial oppression as an explanation for underparticipation. The concept's focus on historical power inequality may well provide insight into how historical racial discrimination has negatively affected African Americans' access to parks. Similarly, economic and cultural capital seem to reflect the underlying ideas of the marginality and ethnicity hypotheses, respectively. Likewise, the habitus' emphasis on distinctive dispositions and cultural values, especially from a historical perspective, echoes the ethnicity hypothesis and also the notion of collective memory. Underrepresentation can be understood in terms of the interrelationships among these three major concepts. To date, leisure studies have focused on the utility of Bourdieu's individual concepts, especially habitus and social and cultural capital (Atencio, Beal, & Wilson, 2009; Devine & Parr, 2008; Doane, 2006; Erickson, Johnson, & Kivel, 2009; Glover, 2004; Mulcahy, Parry, & Glover, 2010; Stalker, 2011). To fully appreciate Bourdieu's theoretical depth and explanatory power, we advocate for a concerted and systematic use of his concepts in examining African Americans' infrequent park visitation within the context of a state park in Texas.

## **Methods**

### ***Research site***

Cedar Hill State Park (CHSP) is located on the outskirts of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex in North Texas. It consists of 1,826 acres on the eastern shore of Joe Pool Lake, ten miles southwest of Dallas, Texas. The land was obtained by the Penn family in the 1850s (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 2006) and opened to the public as Cedar Hill State Park in 1991 by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). The park has 355 campsites as well as marina

facilities, swimming areas, hiking and biking trails, playgrounds, and areas for picnicking. It also features the Penn Farm Agricultural History Center, which is a restoration of the Penn family's house and barns. Ranked as the fourth most popular state park in Texas, it attracted nearly 300,000 visitors in 2012 (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 2012). The cities near CHSP have large, middle class African American populations. For instance, more than half of the residents in Cedar Hill are African Americans. This proportion is nearly four times greater than the national average (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011). The average annual income of cities near CHSP is about \$60,000, in contrast to the state's median household income of \$49,646 (U.S Census Bureau, 2012; ZIP Code Database, 2010).

The majority of CHSP visitors are White Americans in contrast to African Americans who visit less frequently (67% and 11% of overnight visitors, respectively) (Esri, 2010). Data obtained from TPWD suggest that the demographic characteristics of daytime visitors are nearly identical to those of overnight visitors (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 2011). One park official said that African Americans constituted about 10% of daytime visitors (R. D. Rinn, personal communication, September 20, 2012). Our on-site observations affirmed African American underrepresentation at CHSP. Although we observed hundreds of Whites during three site visits to the park, we saw no more than four African Americans at a time. These observations influenced us to study underrepresentation at CHSP.

### **Data generation**

This qualitative study employed archival methods, site visits, and interviews to collect the data. Archival research (Hill, 1993) was used to understand the structure of the field of the TPWD and CHSP as well as African Americans' historical relationship to the park. We contacted the TPWD headquarter to locate any documents illustrating the history of the TPWD and CHSP. The TPWD was fully supportive of our investigation and offered two technical reports (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 1991, 2004) and an unpublished book chapter (Brandimarte & Reed, 2013). They also informed us historian James Wright Steely's book on Texas state parks (1999). We also analyzed the contents of two park brochures to gain a better insight on the information that was provided to park visitors. Lastly, we visited the Cedar Hill public library to review *The Cedar Hill Today*, a local newspaper published through July 2009.

Three site visits to CHSP were made to observe the racial profile of visitors, usage patterns, amenities, and interpretive displays at the Penn Farm Agricultural History Center. These visits were made from October 2012 to January 2013. Each visit lasted approximately four hours. Field notes and photographs were taken in relation to this research topic.

In-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 13 middle-class African Americans who lived near CHSP. The interviews were conducted from October 2012 to February 2013. Informants were recruited by a purposive snowball sampling method. Two city officials in Cedar Hill served as key informants. Recruitment criterion was middle-class African Americans who reside in nearby cities, such as Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville, Lancaster, and Arlington. Based on the average education level and per capita personal income of Texans in 2011 (Economic Research, 2014), individuals who held a college degree and had an annual income of at least \$45,000 were defined as middle class. We asked two key informants to provide a list of individuals who met these recruitment criteria. The sampling objective was to include African American adults who did not appear to have any significant financial difficulty that might prevent them from visiting CHSP. The data collection was terminated when

**Table 1.** Characteristics of informants.

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|   |
|---|
| I-1. Sean; late 50s; male; works for a city government; had lived in Southeast Dallas area for 13 years; an enthusiastic angler; visited CHSP a few times for fishing.  |
| I-2. Risty; mid 30s; male; works for a city government; had lived in Southeast Dallas area for seven years; never visited CHSP.   |
| I-3. Jennifer; mid 50s; female; works for a city government; had lived in Southeast Dallas area for three years; has three daughters and one boy; never visited CHSP.   |
| I-4. Stephanie; mid 40s; female; works for a city government, had lived in Southeast Dallas area for 12 years; used to enjoy outdoor recreation at her father's large property; never visited CHSP.             |
| I-5. David; early 60s; male; retired; had lived in Southeast Dallas area for five years; an enthusiastic outdoor recreationist and has visited multiple national and state parks; never visited CHSP.           |
| I-6. Jeff; early 50s; male; used to work for a city government; lives at Northwest Dallas area; not interested in outdoor recreation and has never visited CHSP.  |
| I-7. Sam; late 50s; male; used to work for a city government; had lived in Southeast Dallas area for 30 years and very familiar with the history of the community; does not have a strong desire to visit CHSP. |
| I-8. Justin; early 40s; male; a business man; born and raised in Dallas area; does not like outdoor recreation because he is afraid of snakes; never visited CHSP.  |
| I-9. Steven; mid 60s; male; retired; lived in the Las Vegas and moved back to Southeast Dallas area 5 years ago; visited CHSP with his friend for fishing; never saw any advertisement about the park.          |
| I-10. Amanda; early 40s; female; had lived in Southeast Dallas area for 10 years; married for 15 years and has three children; not interested in outdoor recreation; never visited CHSP.                        |
| I-11. Anne; late 20s; female; a school teacher; had lived in Dallas all of her life; never visited CHSP.  |
| I-12. Susan; early 20s; female; graduate student; had lived in West Dallas area her entire life before going to graduate school; does not like outdoor recreation; never visited CHSP.                          |
| I-13. Kevin; early 20s; college student; lives in the North Dallas area in a racially diverse community; enjoys basketball and football; not interested in outdoor recreation; never visited CHSP.              |

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the interviews reached data saturation (Patton, 2002). Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the informants. Pseudonyms are used throughout.

The interview questions were developed based on McCracken's (1988) suggestions and organized into two sections. First, we asked demographic information at the beginning of the interview to understand their backgrounds and build some degree of rapport with the informants. Second, we asked about their leisure preferences, visitation patterns to CHSP, socialization process, perceptions about park visitation, and experiences with racial discrimination in relation to outdoor recreation. Interviewees were also asked if they believed that their racial identity, formative experiences in leisure, and experiences with racism had shaped their leisure preferences and visitation patterns regarding CHSP.

### **Data analysis**

The qualitative data were analyzed according to procedures recommended by Marshall and Rossman (2006):

1. The data retrieved from archival methods were organized separately from the interview data.
2. The interview and archival materials were reviewed to become familiar with the data.
3. Recurring ideas were highlighted to identify salient themes.
4. These salient themes were coded using abbreviations of keywords.
5. All coded themes were combined and their interrelations were examined to establish integrative interpretations.
6. Alternative explanations of the study's findings were identified to examine whether our interpretations were the most plausible.

## **Trustworthiness**

This study employed several techniques to bolster trustworthiness of the data. First, triangulation was conducted by combining the information obtained from the archival method and interviews. Triangulation not only provides holistic insights into the phenomenon under investigation but also enhances the transferability of findings (Rossman & Wilson, 1994). Second, we wrote reflective memos throughout the data collection process. By doing this, we were able to monitor how our analytic perspective evolved (Wolcott, 1994). Third, we conducted member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to ensure that our interviewees were comfortable with the interview data and our findings. Fourth, we employed a number of tactics to ensure honesty of our participants (Shenton, 2004). From the outset of each interview, we emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions and encouraged the interviewees to be candid. In addition, we honestly answered any questions about our backgrounds and the aim of the research. Through these techniques, we were able to establish rapport with the participants and obtain rich and candid responses.

## **Findings**

We identified four salient themes from the data analyses:

- racial conflict within the field,
- CHSP as a racialized space,
- African American leisure habitus, and
- lack of relevant attractions.

The first and second themes describe African Americans' nonvisitation to CHSP based on the concept of the field. They reveal unique sociohistorical characteristics of the local community. The third theme explains local African Americans' nonvisitation to CHSP based on habitus, capital, and symbolic violence. It also illustrates informants' opinions regarding African American underutilization of outdoor recreation resources in general. The fourth theme shows a lack of African American history at CHSP. The concept of the field suggests this finding is linked to enduring power inequality between Whites and African Americans. These findings are closely interrelated with each other within Bourdieu's analytic perspective, and establish racial discrimination as an underlying theme.

### ***Racial conflict within the field***

The history of communities near CHSP has been marked by ongoing racial conflict between Whites and African American residents. Informants described that both groups fought for symbolic capital and control over one another within the field of the local communities. Risty stated that although the cities near CHSP used to be "good old boy towns" occupied by "older Whites," there had been a "large scale African American migration" over the last three decades. By 2010, the predominantly White neighborhoods had become African American communities (see Table 2). This demographic change resulted in conflicts between the White residents and African American newcomers. For example, Sam described how white flight had caused longstanding racial conflict in his city:

I tell you why all the White folks are leaving. They call it white flight ....Most of [the] White churches folded, because of Blacks moving in, [and] Whites moving out, right? ....He [a White pastor] says, "Brother [Sam], "I love you." He said, "I love you." He said, "But I can't have Black folks coming to my church."

**Table 2.** Racial demographic changes in four cities near cedar hill state park (cited from U. S. Census, 2011).

|      | Cedar Hill    |               |        | Desoto        |               |        |
|------|---------------|---------------|--------|---------------|---------------|--------|
|      | White         | Black         | Total  | White         | Black         | Total  |
| 1980 | 6,335(92.5%)  | 116(1.7%)     | 6,849  | 14,327(92.2%) | 536(3.4%)     | 15,538 |
| 2010 | 11,322(25.5%) | 23,004(51.7%) | 44,477 | 8,542(17.4%)  | 33,337(68%)   | 49,047 |
|      | Lancaster     |               |        | Duncanville   |               |        |
| 1980 | 12,749(86.1%) | 876(5.9%)     | 14,807 | 26,092(93.9%) | 341(1.2%)     | 27,781 |
| 2010 | 4,689(12.9%)  | 24,827(68.3%) | 36,361 | 12,461(32.3%) | 11,331(29.4%) | 38,524 |

Sometime in the 1990s, a White pastor explicitly stated to Sam that he did not want African American followers, even though he personally loved Sam. The racial conflict between African Americans and Whites is even more vividly illustrated in informants' explanations about struggles over power. Sam noted,

Now, I tell you this. You can take it or leave it. Because it's [racial conflict] so strong, they [White community leaders] eventually ...they say "We're gonna have a Black mayor, eventually we're gonna have a Black superintendent, but let us choose the one. Not the Blacks. Don't let them choose." Right? Do you understand what I'm saying? ...It's the percentage that has much power .... I ain't tell you what somebody told me. I tell you my, I tell you what I know evidently.

Although the number of African American residents had increased, Sam noted that local decision makers remained White. He explained that an African American mayor was elected because he/she acted in favor of White local leaders and residents. Sam later added that White "diehards" were "still controlling things" in his city. Although Sam heavily involved in the city's administration, he felt that racism remained deeply embedded in the political landscape of his community.

*The Cedar Hill Today* confirmed Sam's description of historically hostile racial relationships within the community. The newspaper reported several racial conflicts that took place at Cedar Hill schools. In the early 1990s, the Cedar Hill Concerned Citizens Association (CHCCA) filed a complaint against Cedar Hill Independent School District (CHISD). They requested corrective actions regarding the lack of minorities on the school board and staff as well as the CHISD's insensitivity to minority culture (Hart, 1992, February 6). While the CHCCA aggressively requested the changes, the CHISD rejected the existence of racial issues and communicated infrequently with the CHCCA (Hart, 1992, February 6, 1992, March 5). The conflict between the two organizations continued for several months. Leaders from both parties, concerned citizens, and city council members finally met and discussed possible solutions in May 1992. Eventually, the CHISD Board of Trustees accepted the recommendations of the Multi-cultural Education Committee (Hart, 1992, May 14, p. 1A).

Risty explained that racial conflicts were ongoing in the community. When we asked if he experienced any racial discrimination at CHSP or other recreational settings, he offered this anecdote:

It is very prevalent. I witnessed or experienced it throughout my whole professional life since I began working in the field of parks and recreation ...I can give you a perfect example. I've been on the Juneteenth committee for two years here ....We have a really nice park over here that has an amphitheater that seats about 2,000 people, so we decided to have a free concert, for the community, kind of celebration ....We planned for about 1,800 people, but we ended up having 6,800. Yeah, so that was the best Juneteenth celebration we ever had in the four cities [around CHSP]. It was [an] unbelievable success. Well, we were awarded a national award through the NRPA [National Recreation and Park Association] ....when it was the time to go and receive the

award ....not one African American was on the trip ....Yeah, it was all White Americans. So, to the African American employees, that's like, you know, a slap in the face.

The interview and archival data revealed enduring racial conflicts and power struggles between White and African American residents. The ongoing racial tension was a unique characteristic of the field of nearby communities. This finding serves as an important backdrop for understanding informants' perceptions about and visitation to CHSP.

### ***CHSP as a racialized space***

Experiences with racial conflict and power inequality negatively affected informants' perception of CHSP and made them skeptical about racial inclusiveness at the park. They understood CHSP to be a racialized space where African Americans were unwelcome. In other words, unique structural conditions contributed to informants' habitus. Sam described how his experiences with racism within his community had made him hesitant to visit CHSP:

Everybody likes to go to places where they ...feel welcomed. I don't like going [to] a place like where I'm ...you know what I'm talking about, right? A few years ago, you come through here, they are gonna ask you questions. Because of your race ....He [a police officer] said, "Where are you going? Where are you heading?" He [my friend] said, "I'm going to Waxahachie." He [the police officer] said, "Well, why do you come through here? Can't you find another way?" And that was the state highway up here ....You know what I'm saying? They were pretty bold with it.

Sam strongly doubted that he would be welcomed or even treated politely at CHSP because of his previous experiences with racial discrimination in his community. In other words, his and other informants' negative perceptions about the racial relationships within their communities spilled over into how they felt about possible interpersonal interactions at CHSP.

Moreover, informants' negative perceptions were reinforced by what they believed as CHSP's lack of advertisements. Stephanie stated that she had seen "absolutely nothing" promoting CHSP during her 11 years of residency in the area. She believed that this was indicative of the hostile racial attitudes that permeated CHSP. Similarly, Jennifer explained the lack of advertisements and how local African Americans perceived CHSP as a White space:

They don't really say anything to encourage us to come. All we hear is that some groups went, if we hear that any people of color went there, nothing positive that they say about, so we stay away from there. ...My kids who go everywhere ...haven't had a desire [to visit the park] ...they just don't go. They make it sound like it's not for us. People talk about it, but they talk about it like, it's their [Whites'] place that they go.

Jennifer noted that local African American residents, including her daughters, conceived CHSP to be a White space where African Americans were unwelcome.

Thus, many informants' everyday experiences with racial discrimination in their communities resulted in some skepticism about racial inclusiveness at CHSP. They also noted that many other local African American residents felt the same way. Enduring racial conflict within the field led many informants to believe that the park was just another social space where racist ideologies persisted. This finding indicates that informants internalized their social condition and shaped a distinctive view or mode of conduct (habitus) in regard to CHSP. Respondents said they were not willing to visit CHSP unless park officials assured them that the park was a safe and a welcoming place for African Americans.

### ***African American leisure habitus***

Many informants said they did not visit CHSP or parks in general simply because they did not enjoy parks or outdoor recreation. Although we focused on CHSP specifically, they explained leisure patterns of African Americans more generally. A common theme emerged that suggests African American leisure habitus has little connection to or interest in nature-based outdoor activities. Jeff stated that none of his African American friends and colleagues “talk about visiting state or national parks or outdoor activities.” David, an avid park visitor, noted that he rarely encountered other African Americans in national and state parks. He stated that he is unusual among African Americans because he enjoys visiting parks. Kevin believed that African Americans “gravitated towards playing basketball and different sports” rather than parks or outdoor recreation. Similarly, Anne stated that “football and basketball are more socially acceptable” within African American communities while “outdoor recreation activities are just not socially acceptable.” Sam explained African Americans’ leisure habitus as follows:

I can’t stress it [culture] enough. You know, Black folks ain’t park folks .... We were told to grill up at the backyard, right? And cook-out right at the house. That’s our culture .... as far as on-going visit [to parks], it’s not our culture. Not from what I see, you know. And I’ve been around for a while.

We asked if informants could explain why African Americans possess such a distinctive habitus. Some cited lack of economic capital, growing up in inner city environments, and an absence of formative experiences as antecedents of this African American leisure habitus. However, other informants attributed such leisure habitus to the history of racial oppression of African Americans. Sam explicated an inherent linkage:

Years ago, we couldn’t stay at hotels. You couldn’t go to the diners. You have to go around. Negroes only, Whites only. So it has to, you are right [about the origin of recreation culture] ... it has the root, right? So where you might have Caucasians, they can go anywhere they wanna go and enjoy whatever they wanna enjoy, Negroes couldn’t .... That culture was, well, it was embedded in us, alright? Maybe that’s all we thought we can do. And we feel, well, say stay home, right? So we don’t have to deal with it [racism].

Sam stressed how institutional racism shaped the distinctive habitus of African Americans. Historically, they were segregated from public spaces and discouraged from visiting public parks by slavery and Jim Crow laws (Byrne & Wolch, 2009). In Texas, African Americans were not allowed to visit state parks, nor were they provided with segregated facilities (Steely, 1999). African Americans who did not comply with this institutional racism risked their lives (Feagin, 2006). Sam explained that African Americans distanced themselves from public recreational spaces for their safety, internalized this historical circumstance, and formed a unique leisure habitus. Similarly, Steven used water-based recreation activities as an example. He explained how this African American leisure habitus was shaped by the field and economic and cultural capital:

It’s not that we can’t afford a boat or jet ski. We can afford them now. But it’s not something we had grown [growing] up. Not something we did growing up. A lot of it, we didn’t have a swimming pool growing up. What did we have? We had a basketball court, football field. That’s what we had .... So this has to do with exposure .... You did what you have to do.

Steven explained one legacy of slavery was that African Americans were unable to accumulate economic capital to obtain recreational goods and services. This prevented them from acquiring the cultural capital that would have facilitated their interest in nature-based outdoor recreation. Although slavery and the lack of economic capital are no longer an issue

for African Americans, Steven believed that the centuries of institutional racism and lack of economic and cultural capital resulted in the acquisition of a leisure habitus that excludes outdoor recreation as a common or desirable leisure pursuit.

Similarly, Susan described how institutional racism historically shaped the African American leisure habitus and exerted symbolic violence against African Americans:

We have to talk about access when we talk about the history of leisure, because there was no access to it [outdoor recreation], so how do you expect me [to] appreciate these things if my parents didn't appreciate it, my parents' parents couldn't appreciate it? ....So I feel like it's, it's gotten passed down [from] generation to generation to where, "Oh, no we just don't do these things. We just don't. We don't go camping. That's just not what we do." It's something that settled in the Black community, but [a long time ago] it was like, "We can't do that."

Consistent with Sam and Steven, Susan described how institutional racism, an ideological condition in the field, limited African Americans' access to outdoor recreation and instilled a distinctive leisure habitus in African American communities. Moreover, she stressed that this pattern was *normalized* such that many African Americans in contemporary America failed to recognize that they were increasingly disconnected from nature and nature-based pastimes. In other words, she emphasized the existence of symbolic violence targeting African Americans. In sum, informants argued that long-standing racism was central to explaining African Americans' under-representation at CHSP and other outdoor recreation sites.

### **Lack of relevant attractions**

A lack of viable cultural attractions also explained African Americans' low level of visitation to CHSP. The concept of the field suggests that this finding is a clear sign of power inequality between Whites and African Americans. Although slavery constituted a significant part of the history of CHSP, we found that CHSP did not provide any historical information about African American slaves owned by the Penn family. A report published by TPWD (1991) showed that Penn Farm was established when John Anderson Penn and his family migrated from Sangamon County, Illinois, to Cedar Hill, Texas. He left Illinois with his wife, six unmarried children, and one married son (Joseph R. Penn) and his family and moved to an area near Cedar Hill in 1854. In the late 1850s, John Anderson Penn acquired over 800 acres in the James Hughes survey for an agricultural business, and later his son, John Wesley Penn, became the sole owner of the land. This parcel grew to over 1,100 acres and became known as the Penn Farm.

The report documented that John Anderson Penn and his four sons purchased several slaves in 1857. For example, Joseph R. Penn's property value nearly tripled, from \$2,190 in 1855 to \$6,100 in 1860, and the Penn brothers' economic prosperity continued until the Civil War. However, slavery also caused serious problems for the Penn family. Family lore suggested that John Anderson Penn's sexual promiscuity with a female slave caused a serious rift between him and his sons. John Penn Anderson's divorce and subsequent return to Illinois in the 1860s may support this notion. Although slavery was a central element of the Penn family's early life in Texas, this story was not displayed anywhere at CHSP. None of the interpretive exhibits at the Penn Farm or information in the brochures contained any reference about slavery, as if the Penn family never owned any slaves.

When informants were asked if CHSP should provide a history of African American slavery to visitors, they expressed unanimous interest and insisted that the park should do so. For example, Steven stated that the story should be told because it is an important part of U. S. history and the country is "built on slave labor." Anne also stated that she "would have been

there [CHSP] a long time ago” if she knew the history, and that it would be “a big draw” for local African Americans. Informants felt strongly that CHSP had missed an important attraction for African American visitors.

## Discussion

To our knowledge, this study is the first to employ Bourdieu’s theory to explain minority underrepresentation in outdoor recreation. Bourdieu’s concepts suggest that local African Americans’ underutilization of CHSP is closely related to racial discrimination. We found that local Whites and African Americans competed for symbolic capital and social hegemony. Informants continuously experienced racial discrimination, which negatively affected their perception of CHSP. Consistent with Carter’s (2008) notion of racialized space and Austin’s (1997–1998) idea of “white-identified leisure spaces” (p. 695), informants and perhaps other African Americans perceived CHSP as a White space where minority visitation was both unusual and undesirable. Moreover, informants’ negative perceptions were reinforced by what they saw as a lack of advertising from CHSP. Although it is our contention that CHSP did not intend to discriminate against African Americans and TPWD rarely promotes its individual units, many informants nevertheless believed that the lack of advertising was a reflection of White park officials’ unwelcoming attitude toward African Americans. It seems that informants internalized sociohistorical conditions within their local communities and developed a distinctive disposition (*habitus*) with regards to visiting CHSP. Using Bourdieu’s concepts, we were able to uncover important historical and contextual information about local African Americans’ non-visitation to CHSP.

We also identified that a lack of relevant attractions could be a reason many African Americans, including our informants, were unwilling to visit CHSP. Although slavery is an integral part of the Penn family’s history, this information was conspicuously absent from interpretive exhibits at CHSP. Consistent with the findings of previous studies (Lockhart, 2006; Taylor, 2000), the history of African Americans was missing from the park. This finding indicates an unresolved power inequality between Whites and African Americans. Since the park is located near large African American communities and some informants expressed a strong interest in the history of the Penn family’s slaves, finding a way to incorporate their history into the park’s interpretive narratives could prompt local African Americans to begin visit CHSP. A research firm, Mandala Research (2011), documented that many African Americans want to visit tourist destinations that show African American history. Providing and advertising such a history could result in CHSP becoming an attractive destination for African Americans both within and beyond the local community.

Unlike Bourdieu’s other concepts, economic capital provided little explanation for nonvisitation to CHSP. None of our informants mentioned financial difficulty as a reason for nonvisitation. This finding was expected because we selected African American informants of an above-average socioeconomic status. However, it is noteworthy that a few informants stated that African Americans in impoverished communities might not have sufficient economic means to visit parks or enjoy outdoor recreation activities. In fact, poverty rates are highest among African Americans, and many African Americans likely experience formidable financial barriers to visiting parks (Scott, 2013). Thus, economic capital might demonstrate a better theoretical utility with different sample groups or social contexts.

Although we specifically focused on the case of CHSP, Bourdieu’s theoretical framework offered a compelling explanation for African Americans’ underrepresentation in outdoor recreation beyond the context of this study. Informants such as Sam, Steven, and Susan

explained that relentless racial oppression was central to the formation of the African American leisure habitus, as well as to understanding its complex interplay with notions of the field and capital. They argued that historical racial discrimination in the field of American society made it difficult for African Americans to attain any of the four types of capital, and it also negatively affected the formation of a leisure habitus that would allow them to appreciate parks or outdoor recreation. Their description is convincing and consistent with historical evidence. For instance, slavery and Jim Crow laws extorted economic capital from African Americans for nearly 250 years (Feagin, 2006). Although institutional racism was banned in 1964, economic impoverishment has continued among numerous African Americans because they have had little to no inherited assets and suffered de facto racial discrimination in employment (Feagin, 2014; Shapiro, 2004). To put this in perspective, African Americans owned 0.5% of the total wealth in the United States when the Civil War ended in 1865, yet this figure changed to a meager 1% by 1990, a full 125 years after the abolition of slavery (Anderson, 1994).

Informants asserted that a lack of economic capital not only inhibited African Americans' access to outdoor recreation products and services but also served as a barrier to obtaining cultural capital, that is, knowledge and skills for pursuing outdoor recreation activities. Moreover, researchers have documented how institutional racism once permeated the field of outdoor recreation. At one time, African Americans were barred from visiting state parks, while these recreational resources were historically managed and occupied by White males (Byrne & Wolch, 2009; Floyd & Mowatt, 2014; Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, 2004). As a result of this historical condition, it is doubtful if African Americans could obtain sufficient social and symbolic capital to pursue outdoor recreation activities.

The informants argued that African Americans' historical scarcity of the four types of capital and the power inequality they faced at outdoor recreation areas have resulted in them developing a leisure habitus that is antithetical to the natural environment, parks, and outdoor recreation activities in general. Their comments indicated that this leisure habitus was socially reproduced by both past and present racial discrimination, and now is deeply embedded in the African American community. Informants explained that African Americans in general are unlikely to visit parks or engage in nature-based outdoor recreation, even though they have sufficient economic capital. This is consistent with Bourdieu's (1977) explanation that a habitus tends to reproduce those actions consistent with the conditions under which it was produced.

Moreover, informants implied that symbolic violence targeted African Americans. For example, Susan argued that since African Americans' nonvisitation to parks and outdoor recreation has been *normalized* during the centuries of racial oppression, many African Americans attribute this to their own cultural disposition. Coincidentally, some informants, such as Anna, Jeff, and Kevin, commented that African American culture is disconnected from outdoor recreation and more receptive to sports, such as basketball and football. Moreover, their comments contradicted the fact that African Americans have historically had a close relationship with nature and were extremely skilled agriculturists, hunters, and anglers (Finney, 2014; Giltner, 2008; Glave, 2010). Collectively speaking, these findings suggested the continued existence of symbolic violence in African American communities.

Bourdieu's analytic perspective implies a deep-seated historical connection between racism and African Americans' under-representation in outdoor recreation. While McDonald (2009) urged leisure researchers to be more circumspect about the ideological force that normalizes White dominance and hegemony, we found that underrepresentation can be explained by a legacy of racial discrimination. Although leisure scholars are shifting their focus away from

racism to explain African Americans' leisure participation (Floyd, 2007; Phillipp, 2000), this study illustrates that it is crucial to understanding African Americans' nonvisitation patterns and tendencies.

This study has three main limitations. First, although Bourdieu's analytic perspective advocates the utility of both qualitative and quantitative data in social science research (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), and this study relied exclusively on qualitative data. A future study could conduct empirical survey research in the cities around CHSP. Numerical data would be useful to supplement this study's findings. Second, this study focused on middle-class African Americans' perceptions. Exploring the viewpoints of multiple stakeholders, such as park officials, local White residents, and African Americans of other social classes, would broaden our understanding of nonparticipation. Finally, to better understand African Americans' underrepresentation in general, a future study could investigate parks at different locations. Conducting similar studies at different parks and recruiting African Americans from various regions would facilitate a deeper understanding of underrepresentation.

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